

The STORY *of* SHEP

by

Bertha E. Jaques

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Confidences

The STORY *of* SHEP

Written by His Mistress

Bertha E. Jaques

Chicago
4316 Greenwood Avenue
MCMXII

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thousand copies, of which
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THIS is an appreciation of a noble dog that I knew intimately for over ten years. Incidentally, it reflects a kindly light on all good dogs, for they are much alike. It is a simple story, for Shep's life was uneventful. He never performed any heroic feat nor accomplished marvelous things, but he loved his master and mistress with an unfaltering devotion. For this and his many admirable qualities, it has been a work of love to record these facts and dedicate the tribute to Shep's Master.

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The first time we saw Shep, he was trotting briskly down the middle of the road, head up and white tail waving like a flag of truce. He seemed to come from nowhere in particular and his only aim, apparently, was to find out who the strangers were walking along his road. With the confidence of a young dog who has not yet stored up memories of rebuffs, he came up to us wagging his plume graciously, his mouth open in a panting smile. It was then that we noticed the remarkable beauty of his large brown eyes. Gentle loving eyes they were, yet bright and spirited. He looked at us in such an engaging way that we could not deny

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him a pat even if we had not been dog lovers, which we were.

When I remarked, "Why, how do you do, you beautiful dog?" Shep looked a little surprised, being unaccustomed, as I afterwards learned, to polite forms of greeting. It puzzled him a little, but the tone was so unmistakably friendly, that he walked directly up to us, sniffing our clothes that he might identify us by that keen and subtle sense of smell possessed by all dogs.

We patted him on his fine, well-modeled head and gently scratched those vulnerable places under his jaw. This settled the



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matter so far as Shep was concerned. Here were two people who understood a dog; spoke to him in a way he approved, knew what he liked, and took no advantage of their difference in size.

This was all apparent in the way he immediately wheeled about and attached himself to us, walking along beside us with the dignity of his newly acquired respect for himself. We took his friendliness to mean merely a desire to share our society a little longer and perhaps he might be able to lead us somewhere. He knew where some Molly Cottontails ran, and down the hill near an oak tree

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was the home of a woodchuck; he ought to know for had he not chased him in there many times?

But we were intent upon gloating over our recently acquired land, where the woodchuck held forth as original squatter, and neglected further conversation with Shep to expatiate upon the fine location for a log cabin under an enormous wild cherry tree over-run with a wild grapevine that hung in long green folds like a cloak.

“Don’t you think you ought to go home, Spot?” said I, noticing that he still lingered near us. Now this is the difference between men and dogs: when we talked to

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Shep, he evidently understood what we said, for he acted quite subdued when I suggested his leaving; but when I asked him his name and he barked several times, I had to admit I could not understand what he said. Spot suggested itself because of the several black and brown spots on his pure white coat; but he did not respond to it eagerly and I knew he was only tolerating the mistake out of politeness to his newly found friends.

As we walked back the quiet country road, we met our neighbor across the way; a tall, angular man, who limped with a bone slivered by a bullet in the war.

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He was known thereabouts as Uncle John; not as a term of endearment but of familiarity.

“Is this your dog?” said we, after courtesies and weather observations were exchanged. “Naw,” said he. “He ain’t nobody’s dog, but he stays here about as much as any place.”

“He is a very nice dog,” I remarked, “and somebody ought to be proud to own him.” Afterwards my husband said that remark was a mistake if I had any notion of getting the dog myself. He says people always want to keep anything that someone else wants or be well paid for it.



He Still Lingered Near Us

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Not so with Uncle John, whose ownership was too slight and irregular to make him feel like driving a bargain. "Well, the dog don't belong to nobody as I know of. He just lives around from place to place. Do you want him?" said he suddenly, as if recognizing a chance to bestow a gift without sacrifice. My husband and I looked at each other, startled by the necessity of deciding so momentous a question as the ownership of a fine, large dog. It might not be a momentous question in the country, but we lived in a big city eighty miles away and it would be no easy matter to transport a big dog back and forth.

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Now a small dog can go in a basket, under cloaks, and in other surreptitious ways, but a large dog asserts himself and must be reckoned with.

Besides that, there is Patsy! What would he say? Not that we were under any obligations to consider Patsy's feelings in the matter. He did not belong to us so much as we belonged to him. When a full grown alley cat, black as his Satanic Majesty is painted, walks in and announces his determination to board with you the rest of his life, you are not obliged to defer to his wishes on all household affairs. But we

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knew in our hearts that he would assert himself in bold and belligerent language because we had overheard his remarks to the yellow cat next door and what he said could not decently be printed here.

“A dog like this would be lots of company and some protection when I am here in the cottage alone,” I suggested, hopefully. And that settled it with us.

“What is his name?” I asked Uncle John.

“Oh, most folks calls him Shep; he’ll answer to any name, I reckon.”

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“Do you know where he came from?” I pursued, intent upon getting some family history.

“Some summer resorters brought him from Kalamazoo when he was a pup to play with their children; when they went off, they just left him on the town, like such people do, and he’s wandered around ever since gettin’ his livin’ from garbage barrels and folks. He’s only a young dog; not more’n a year old, I should judge.”

“But what kind of a dog is he?”

“I heard his mother was a white collie,” drawled Uncle John. “I don’t know what you’d call him;



Waiting for His Future to be Decided

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collie dogs don't have such curly hair; he's got some St. Bernard traits and some setter; but I reckon he's just plain dog."

At this, my soul rose up in rebellion for already, upon such short acquaintance, I recognized a superior dog. Added to this was the pride of possession which exalts one's belongings.

"Do you want to stay with us, Shep?" I inquired of the dog, who was looking with interest from one to another as if cognizant that his future was being decided.

"Woof!" he replied without hesitation, and waved his thick plume with enthusiasm.

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"Seems to know what he wants," Uncle John remarked in a condescending way, as if to humor my assumption of Shep's understanding.

"Listen, Shep," said I, solemnly. "You are going to be our dog from now on and you must stay with us as a good dog should."

From that moment we had a friend whose devotion never wavered for an instant. Feeling that there was unusual intelligence in this splendid creature, I wanted to thank someone for him. Though Uncle John had been only occasional owner, he accepted my gratitude in full with complacency

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and never allowed us to forget the debt.

As we turned back to our temporary abiding place, it was with a feeling of responsibility which Shep did not share; for he capered about, picked up sticks and invited us to take them away from him, giving every sign of having accepted us without reserve.

That night Shep slept beside my bed on a rug which he promptly appropriated for his own, and this ends the chapter of how he became our dog.

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The education of Shep was a gradual and almost unconscious process with us both. No attempt was made to develop him into a trick dog by unusual and uncanine like habits. It was purely a matter of association and companionship, as between two people; an exchange of affection that deepened with years and, on Shep's part, an increasing knowledge of the meaning of things.

Our first clear evidence of his acquired knowledge with no attempted teaching, was his recognition of a peculiar whistle my husband and I had to call each other. Our intimate friends knew



Shep Recognizes Our Whistle

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and responded to this call so we used it to let them know of our arrival after an absence in the city.

We had not yet called at the farmhouse to get Shep, but at the first sound of our whistle, directed to our passing friends, Shep came tearing across the orchard to greet us, evincing his joy by whining, leaping, yelping, and barking. Thereafter, we found that our adopted whistle would secure his immediate attention amid other calls and whistles, while he paid no heed to the ordinary methods of calling dogs.

It was during weeks when Shep and I were entirely alone on the

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place that he formed his habits in accordance with mine and gradually increased his vocabulary, for I talked to him as I would to a child. He watched me intently, his head on one side, his ears alert and his whole soul yearning to understand. How much more he understood than he replied to, we do not know. When I said, "Shep, this is a nice grassy place to roll over," he did so at once, proving that the words and the action were associated.

Instead of barking for what he wanted, I taught him to sneeze and that word was perfectly understood by him. Not only did he

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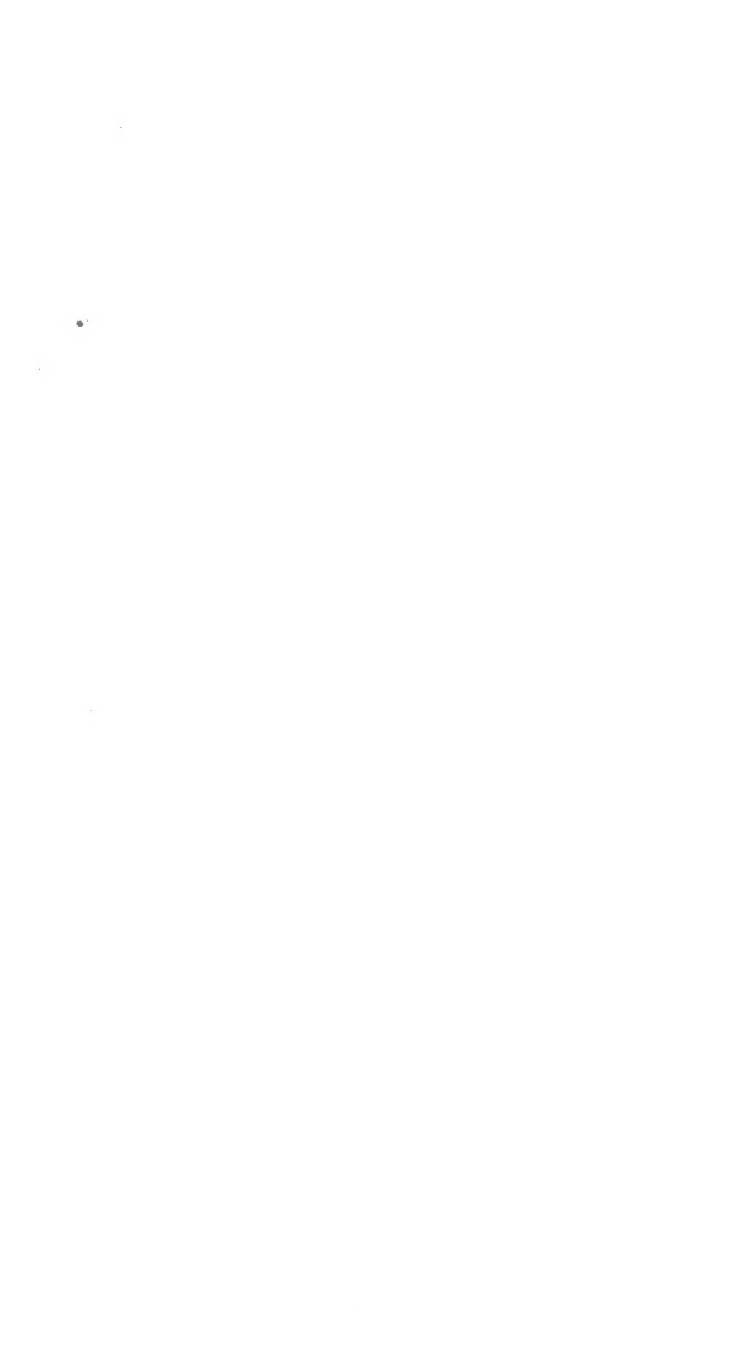
understand the word, but expressed his varying degrees of interest by either a slight sniff or a tremendous snort. If he wanted anything very much, his sneeze was accompanied by a deep bow. Sometimes he would simply nod his head yes when he wanted another bite.

“There is a dog going along the road, Shep,” spoken in ordinary tones, was enough to rouse him from a nap and send him hurrying to the north window where a seat on the big woodbox commanded a view of the place. If the dog was visible, and Shep thought it a matter worth his

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investigation, he ran to the door and begged to go out. If the game did not appeal to him, he contented himself with a series of low growls and mutterings, opening and closing his mouth, exactly as if he were talking to himself.

As we were never separated day or night while in the country, Shep had no restriction offered to his movements until the first disciplining, which his Master gave. As he hurried to catch a train one day, he ordered Shep to stay at home. This being a totally new experience, Shep did not understand it and treated the matter as a joke, trotting along





Shep as a Figure-head in the Boat

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joyfully. But the Master enforced his order with a switch and sent Shep back. Thinking he might have been mistaken after all, Shep slipped along the river path and joined his Master near the town. He was astonished to be repulsed and commanded to go home again. This impressed the matter so deeply on his sensitive mind that all the rest of his life he waited politely, but eagerly, for an invitation before attempting to follow either of us. It seemed to be his first recognition of a superior power and he never forgot it.

There was only one exception to this rule and that was when we

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went on the river in a row boat. This was an occasion when Shep deliberately and even defiantly disobeyed. He was willing to be whipped but no punishment was severe enough to make him miss a boat ride, which he dearly loved. As his ordinary weight was sixty-five pounds, he could not be lifted out of the boat when he crouched in the bottom imploring to stay. These occasions were very few. It was never my wish to exclude him from the boat, except when every seat was to be filled, or some passenger objected to dogs. There are such people, I have discovered, who pick a white hair from their garments with the air

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of a martyr and look unspeakable things at the dog.

Shep's position in the boat was that of a splendid figure-head at the prow. With hind feet on the small triangular seat, and forefeet on the bow, he stood, head up, the corners of his soft drooping ears pointing forward, looking like a white sail spread for the breeze. Dignified and noble of bearing always, his attitude in the boat became that of a commander scanning the horizon.

It was through this habit that we first learned of another human trait Shep possessed to a large degree. In people we designate

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it variously, according to the calibre of character, as conceit, vanity or self-consciousness. In Shep, it was pride growing out of appreciation for admiring attention. In boating season our appearance on the river occasioned unfailing admiration and frank remarks. These only slightly varied from, "Oh, look at that beautiful dog!" The adjectives ran the gamut of "lovely, pretty, fine and big," all of which Shep understood and approved by a slow wag of his plume and a turn of his head. Sometimes it was his humor to gaze far ahead and pretend that he did not hear; but when the boat had passed, he



A River Excursion

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would look around to see if he was still being observed.

Sometimes when we were out together on the river, he would lie on the bottom of the boat, or with his head on a seat, quiet and dozing, until the sound of voices announced approaching boats. Then Shep would get up and take a figure-head attitude which, in a human being, would certainly be called posing. Having received due notice and applause, he would subside again.

These river excursions were Shep's greatest delight, they provided entertainment of so many kinds. However much he wanted

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a run, he would always start in the boat even if he only rode around the first bend of the river. Then he was ready to leap from the boat to the bank and race along stirring up all sorts of mysterious and delicious scents in the grass. Sometimes a startled killdee whirled from under his nose, much to his discomfiture. Liking the looks of the other bank, he would plunge in the river and swim across. After this exertion, repeated several times, he was ready to ride for a while and made his want known by imperative barks.

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Shep only escaped being a hunting dog by lacking the training, which he could not have with animal lovers as owners. He had the dog's natural instinct for chase and delighted to follow anything that ran.

Tommy Traddles taught Shep that when cats stopped and faced him, it was safer for him to stop also. Tommy does not really belong in this story, except for the part he had in Shep's education, having taught him to respect the rights of large gray cats who are good hunters and valiant fighters.

Tommy Traddles adopted us as soon as we settled in the cottage

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and made his welcome secure by displaying traits of character peculiar to unclaimed individuals the world over. He was strong and self-reliant not even deigning to ask anyone to open the screen door when he wanted to come in the house. He clawed the wire, gave the door a jerk and slipped in between bangs; or, reversing the operation, he butted himself out.

Unaccustomed to the seductions of petting and chin-scratching, he fell a victim to these attentions and plainly indicated his intention to occupy the depression in the middle of the couch forever after.



Going on Tip Toe to Catch the Woodchuck

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Shep, being a gentlemen always, dropped his aggressive attitude for one of indifference, though he was plainly jealous of any attention Tommy Traddles received at our hands.

Deprived of cat-chasing, Shep transferred his energies to Molly Cottontails, woodchucks and squirrels. In all of these pursuits he was greatly encouraged. It afforded excellent exercise and never resulted in anything but a good scare for the animal pursued. But even the fright was not effectual in saving our young peas and tender garden stuff. The timid rabbits became more wary, but the old

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woodchuck was wise beyond his years. He had seen too many dogs not to trust his own speed utterly. Besides, he had a shelter under the steps if there was not time to reach one of the numerous underground tunnels to his house.

The word "woodchuck" was sufficient any time to make Shep scurry around the cabin. After each absence, he would take a short cut home to reach the cottage first, going literally on tip-toe as he made a very careful and noiseless circuit of the place, hoping to catch Mr. Woodchuck off his guard.

This he never did, because it was Grandpa Woodchuck's chief



The Burial of the Woodchuck

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business to be on guard. But alas! for the confidence and inexperience of youth. One of the younger generation ventured too far from the steps. Shep caught him, shook the life out of him, proudly displayed him to us, then carefully buried him.

But interment was not understood to be final until he had received sufficient approbation, as we learned when he caught an enormous woodchuck in the orchard of a neighbor. We praised him for his prowess and, to ease our conscience for the murder of even a reprobate, helped Shep conduct his funeral ceremonies with dispatch.

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We stopped at the neighbor's house to tell them of the laudable act in ridding them of a pest; when suddenly Shep disappeared. Pretty soon he came back with the resurrected woodchuck in his mouth and laid it before our friends as conclusive proof that all we said was perfectly true. Here was the evidence of his achievement and he would be pleased to receive congratulations. These were given to his satisfaction and he trotted off to give Mr. Woodchuck his second and final burial.

Shep's habit of burying things was not confined to deceased woodchucks and superfluous bones.

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If he had something on his mind, which meant in his mouth, and did not know what to do with it, he buried it, exercising the same slyness and secrecy that he did with bones.

As he could carry any sort of a package up to three pounds in weight, this trick sometimes proved annoying and inconvenient. For instance, when the ultimate destination of a bag of fine peas was the dinner pot, it disturbed arrangements to have Shep plant them in some unknown spot in the cornfield. If tombstones were erected over all Shep's buried treasures, cultivation of the orchard

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and garden would be quite impossible. Dry goods, groceries, meat, and one perfectly good shoe which he walked out with one morning, all repose peacefully in various portions of the place awaiting resurrection by the plow.



Shep's Happiest Achievement

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Shep's happiest achievement was carrying an umbrella, which he did with the pompous air of a drum major, but never away from home. The responsibility of something to carry always turned his head towards home at once and we must keep him in sight or he would deposit his treasure in the earth before we could rescue it. Two umbrellas were added to his graveyard, without anything to mark their last resting place, before we realized that in matters of this kind his judgment was not to be trusted.

His idea of ownership was rather vague too and having had nearly everything he wanted, he

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saw no reason why he should not appropriate an umbrella whenever he saw one. So it was a great surprise to him to be smartly whacked over the head when, with the best of intentions, he attempted to walk off with a strange old lady's umbrella.

Shep knew what meat-shop meant and was always eager to visit one, but refused to leave until he had a bone to carry home. It was never necessary to pay for these small attentions as all the market men knew and admired Shep's good manners and gentle ways. Going to the store always meant carrying home packages,

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but he could not be fooled as I learned when I filled an empty bag with leaves and let him carry it so he would not beg for the package I had. He carried the bag a few steps, threw it down, put one paw on it and tore it to pieces with his teeth. This he never did with any other package.

Next to the umbrella, Shep loved most to carry his Master's medicine case home from calls, or his gloves. No dog could distract his attention and any attempt at familiarity was promptly discouraged by suppressed growls as he walked straight ahead with great dignity.

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Every self-respecting dog loves to be useful and is always happy to feel that he is of service to one he loves. So Shep was proud to fetch and carry his Master's slippers.

"If you'll get my hat, Shep, we'll take a walk," said in an ordinary tone of voice, was enough any time to make him climb up to the hat rack, pull the Doctor's hat down and carry it to him, tail waving and eyes bright.

This association of things brought about one of Shep's celebrated performances. The Doctor had a visitor who stayed all afternoon, much to Shep's disgust. All



Where Did You Bury That Umbrella?

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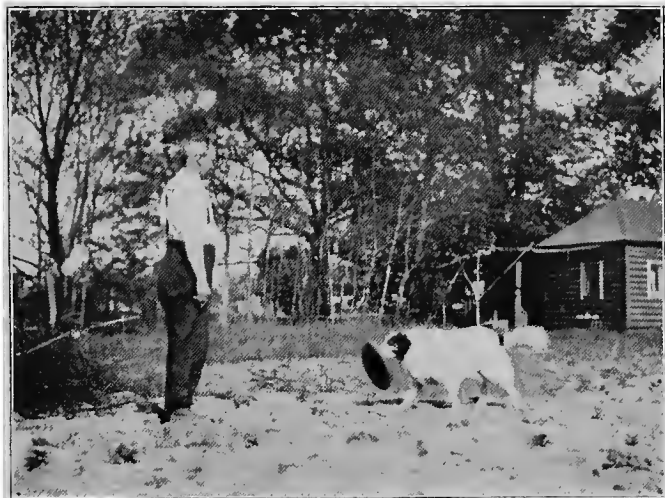
his usual friendly overtures were ignored. Finally, not being able to reach any hat, he brought the caller's huge overshoes and laid them suggestively at his feet. The hint was not too subtle for the visitor and Shep got his walk.

With all his dignity, Shep had a sense of humor which made him indulge in the only bad trick he had. During the bicycle craze, he would run beside a wheel and suddenly give a tremendous bark, as a child would shout "boo," then drop back with his mouth in a wide grin and pretend to be absorbed in examining something in the road. Occasionally a pedestrian would receive a similar shock

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and, if nervous, would jump and exclaim in various degrees of profanity. The noisier the demonstration, the more amused Shep seemed to be and I shame-facedly confess that some of the performances were enough to make a dog laugh.

If the Recording Angel saw the incident, I am sure he failed to register any of the flamboyant oaths that issued from the beard of a good old Methodist deacon whose chronic stiffness from rheumatism was his one stock in conversational trade. He was hobbling along at a gait proper to an invalid when Shep silently approached



His Master's Hat

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from behind, gave his largest and best bark and hastily retreated. The deacon went up into the air with the agility of a skyrocket and came down with the uncertainty of the stick. But there was no uncertainty about his language when he beheld Shep intently examining a hitching post. He said right out what he would do if that dog belonged to him and I have no doubt, from his fierce expression, he was capable of it.

It was a bad trick, but not so bad as it appeared, for Shep had no vicious traits and was never known to bite anything. The difficulty lay in persuading people it

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was only a dog's joke. These exuberances were only occasional and entirely confined to his youthful days in the country.

We taught him to chase a flock of chickens away from our cabin where they congregated early in the morning to practice crowing. Although he hurried them out of the orchard and across the road to their own home, he never touched one of them, and a plump pullet is not a morsel to be scorned by a dog that is set to chase them.

Shep distinctly felt his responsibility when we were left alone on the place and showed it in various ways; he was more alert,

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watchful and ready with a growl at the slightest noise. If I had felt any fear, Shep would have dispelled it with his loving guardianship.

His notions of respectability seemed to be governed largely by clothes, which sounds snobbish in dog or man, but is the only superficial way one has of judging. Well dressed persons could come in unchallenged, but a tramp, or a colored man, had to furnish a passport to get past Shep's growls. In the city his special detestation were the boys who threw circulars at the door; it was a suspicious proceeding and called for loud protestations on his part.

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No child could be more curious as to visitors than Shep. At the ring of the door-bell, which he never confused with the telephone, he would hurry to see who was coming. Unless shut out of the office, he occupied his corner of the room listening attentively to consultations. Exclusion did not prevent him from hearing what was being said for several times I saw him with his ear at the crack of the door and I told him frankly what people in general thought about eavesdropping.

Such an exaggerated notion did he have of the importance of his presence, that one morning at half



Assisting at a Consultation

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past two Shep, half awake, climbed down from his bed, went to the office where the Doctor had been called for a consultation, got up in a chair and nodded like a sleepy old man. When the patient left, he went back to bed and stretched out with a sigh as if the practice of medicine were an arduous task and sadly interfered with a dog's regular habits.

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Shep's ten years with us were divided between the city in winter and the farm in summer. His travels back and forth on boat and train were matters of great interest to him and he behaved like the gentlemen he always was. He preferred the five hours on the boat for one, or both of us, could visit him in the freight room. On the train he rode in the baggage car curled up on his own rug which seemed to give him a sense of comfort in strange surroundings.

A train meant going somewhere, or someone coming, either of which were exciting events to Shep. If left to lead the way for

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a walk, he invariably started towards the suburban station which represented his point of departure and arrival.

Shep's social instincts were largely developed. He loved company and never forgot his friends though years intervened between the meetings. Also he distinctly remembered what favors his different friends could bestow and had no hesitation in calling on them for what he wanted.

During our absence from the farm, Shep relapsed into his former roving habits and spent his time in visiting from house to house, taking a nap in a special

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corner at one place, asking for cake, which he was sure to get at another, and timing his arrival at another house for the hour when bones were cleared from the table.

These early habits complicated his ownership. As he grew to be such a handsome dog and people discovered how much we valued him, his crop of previous owners increased. After his Master had bought off the claim of one boy, nearly all the town proceeded to own Shep, though they were all willing we should keep and feed him and pay for his license.

Fanatics and dog-haters were doubtless much pleased when the

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City Council of Chicago passed an ordinance requiring all dogs to be muzzled the entire year. We considered this law without reason or justice but tried to abide by it and bought a muzzle for Shep. A chain and collar had made him act like a criminal, but the muzzle was the last state of ignominy to impose on a splendid, free country dog. In utter disgrace, he crouched flat on the ground, his nose between his paws, and his eyes full of reproach, refusing to move until the obnoxious thing was removed.

Dogs become vicious through mistreatment, which means hunger, neglect, being hurt, and most of all, through thoughtless teasing

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by children. Boys torment dogs until they try to defend themselves. Their only means of defense lies in their teeth. They bite; they are called mad, and they must be killed. Animals have their rights which, when understood and recognized, will reduce opportunities for accidents. Instead of spreading measures to educate people in the humane treatment of animals, men make cruelty lawful by imposing muzzles where they are not needed and that is upon dogs with owners. As no one is responsible for homeless dogs, they go unmuzzled as long as they escape the dog-catchers.



Talking About the Muzzle

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We paid for our yielding to Shep's convictions by constant fear of these brutal men, who discriminate against street dogs in favor of fine ones, for these bring financial returns in the way of redemption money. No one cares to pay the fine of a homeless dog. Our telephone was kept busy one forenoon by inquiries from neighbors who had seen the dog wagon capture a large white dog and they feared it was Shep.

The reputation that a noble dog gains in a neighborhood in eight years by dignified conduct and gentle disposition, stands him in good stead. All the neighbors

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knew and admired Shep because he did not bark and annoy them. The children many blocks from home all knew and called him by name. He submitted indulgently to having his head patted and allowed them to bury their hands in his soft, white curls, but he did not court attention from children who were rough in their caresses.

Even the policemen, be it said to their credit, exercised latitude toward this well known character of the neighborhood. Occasionally a new man respectfully suggested that the orders about muzzling were strict. Then I explained that Shep and I were

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sorry not to obey the law, but he was old and gentle and I knew I was exposing no one to danger from him as he was never on the street alone. The policeman stroked Shep's head, called him a fine old rascal, and we passed on unmuzzled and unchained.

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Shep's vanity was never so apparent as when he had just had a bath. Then he was most conscious of his beauty and expressed his pride in unmistakable ways. It was the task of a man to scrub the long thick hair and this the Doctor did at intervals of about two weeks in the city. "Shep, it is time for a bath," was sufficient to start him for the tub over which he stood on an open wooden rack and received warm water from a tank above him. After being dried with his own coarse towels, brushed with his own comb and brush (both metal so they could be scalded), he fluffed out like a newly opened ball of cotton.

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His daily walk to the station for the evening paper, which he strutted home with in his mouth, became a triumphal parade with an admiring audience on every side. At such times he was also fond of sitting on the front steps where he received still further admiration from passersby. It may seem unwise to have encouraged such vanity even in a dog, but it was so frank and innocent, and so thoroughly justified, that we allowed him always to believe he was the handsomest dog in the block.

The greatest problem of a dog's life in the city is exercise. In the country Shep was free to run

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wherever he wished, although that was never out of sound of our whistle when we were there. With Mr. Woodchuck to watch, rabbits and squirrels to chase, the chickens to keep out of the orchard, excursions up the river, trips to town, and the bath hour in the lake, he led a very busy life.

In the city, the pleasant back yard was a mere breathing space and had no charm for him unless one of us was there. He could not go out of the front door alone, and knew it; so his tricks to get us to go for a walk were clever. The Doctor, being an early riser, gave Shep his best exercise by



Bath Hour at the Lake

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having him follow a bicycle several miles each morning. One ultimate point in late summer was a large fountain at the entrance of the park. It probably would have shocked a policeman, had any been abroad at that early hour, to see Shep leap into the pool, sit down in the water up to his neck and look about with great satisfaction. It never disturbed the great man whose statue towered above the fountain for his hand was always outstretched as if in friendly benediction.

Whatever the weather, Master or Mistress must go with Shep several times a day for a walk,

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as he would go with no one else. Sometimes we were inclined to look upon this as an inconvenience, but it proved beneficial. It was good for health and we saw so many things that stay-at-homes and persons who only ride know nothing about. In the early spring it was interesting to keep track of the very first green things, even though they happened to be leaves of motherwort in a sheltered corner of a vacant lot. Then there were the promises in the swelling lilac buds and other awakening bushes, pale spikes of daffodils and tulip sheaths. In the autumn we learned the haunts of the *coprinus micaceus* and came home

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from walks down one of the great boulevards with fine meals of this delicious mushroom.

Shep made discoveries too, for in several of the big yards he caught a glimpse of gray squirrels streaking up the trees and he always revisited these places, if he could.

In rainy weather Shep knew that each foot must be wiped before he could enter the house and lifted one after the other with a bored expression for this attention. During a long run, he could pick up as much mud as an automobile and this meant an entrance by way of the basement where a

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pan of water was placed on the floor. Resigned, but uninterested, he soaked first one foot and then another, submitted to the wiping and then went to his corner in the office for a much needed nap.

Never have I known a dog of such fixed habits. He was always the first one to respond to the call for meals. There was nothing to explain this habit, for he was not fed at the table, unless it was just his desire to be where we were. He occupied a certain corner of the room and appeared to doze through the meal, although any mention of his name was immediately acknowledged by his vocal

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tail which he thumped loudly on the floor.

Between five and six o'clock, Shep had his one meal of the day of dog biscuit, varied with meat, vegetables and corn or oatmeal mush. At bed time, he had a walk around the block; then he went straight through the house to the kitchen where he had a bowl of water with a little milk in it. No toper was ever more wedded to his toddy than Shep to his milk and water just before he went to bed.

Then he was ready, providing we were, to climb the stairs to a couch beside an open window

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upon which was spread a piece of heavy muslin (frequently washed) and stretch out for the night. Never, unless told to do so, did he get up on any piece of furniture except his bed.

In addition to his daily task of carrying bundles and the evening paper, Shep brought the mail to my studio on the third floor. In his later years, in spite of all the exercise we could provide, Shep grew heavy and the trip up two flights of stairs brought him to the top panting and puffing. But his serious performance of this daily duty, and the approbation he won, seemed to be sufficient reward.

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All our love and good care could not shield Shep from the calamity of old age which manifested itself by cataracts in both of his big brown eyes. Gradually the little white curtains shut down and obscured his vision to all but moving objects in a strong light. Stationary objects he could not see at all and this fact was responsible for many hard bumps on his head and nose.

It also occasioned collisions with Patsy, the uninvited one, who deeply resented Shep's intrusion; but Shep's superior bulk and evident friendliness with the Powers of the household made Patsy content himself with slipping under

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chairs and tables, from which he projected vituperative hisses of defiance.

As long as Shep could see, he carefully avoided this violent black spot and so they managed to exist in the same house. As nothing ever happened, Patsy grew indifferent and ceased to get under chairs. Shep, blind to a black and unmoving object, came near stepping on Patsy several times, whereupon that spitfire of an alley cat, with no manners, exploded with volcanic rage and slapped poor Shep's unoffending nose with all four needled claws at once; at least this was Shep's version of

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it. This, of course, did not increase his confidence in going about alone, not knowing what minute he might meet a black sky-rocket. In vain we explained to Patsy and to Shep; neither ever understood the other. Shep was sure he was the persecuted one and Patsy knew he was.

As Shep's eyesight diminished, his hearing and smell seemed to be more acute and a curious intuition warned him of danger, except in the case of Patsy. He learned new words to meet new conditions, and his dependence upon us drew the bond still tighter on both sides. We now became,

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in a measure, his eyes; we had to see for him and make up for the things that were blotted out.

“Careful, Shep,” would stop him at once as it meant danger; a post or tree or something to bump into. At the gutter of a street crossing he understood and acted upon our advice to “step up” or “step down,” never confusing the two commands. Of automobiles he shared my fear and never crossed the street until given the signal to do so.

In the districts about our home in Chicago and the farm in Michigan, with which he was familiar, he made his way without hesitation



At the Farm

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and did not bump into anything that was in its rightful place. As long as he was on the paved part of the walk, or in the beaten paths, he walked with confidence and even broke into a little trot when told he was all right. But in strange places he had to be guided like a blind person. Since he had to rely chiefly upon his sense of hearing, he was disturbed by unusual sounds and more ready to bark than if he could see the cause, but assurance from us that everything was all right quieted him at once.

At least ten years of Shep's life were happy ones. The two before we knew him were full of what

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might be hardships to an old dog, but to a healthy pup, they were experiences that helped form his character.

As the average limit of a dog's life is fourteen years, we knew that with the best of care Shep's days were numbered; but we faced the end with philosophical resignation knowing that it was better for us to lose him than for him to lose us. We were all he had in life and he wanted nothing else. Good food and lodging never compensated for our absence. The conditions at the farm were ideal for any dog, but Shep's life was empty without our companionship;

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just anybody would not do. Not that he did not make friends; he had devoted admirers and made the best of things but no attraction could hold him when either his Master or Mistress spoke.

When the end came, as we knew it must, Shep was laid not far from those he loved. We are glad we have known such a faithful friend and feel sure that in the eternal scheme of things some provision will be made whereby Shep may always be near his loving Master and Mistress.

